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Department of State

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Control: 10648
Rec'd: November 17, 1959
9:19 p.m.

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FROM: Benghazi

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 225, November 17, 4 p.m.

SENT DEPARTMENT 225, REPEATED INFORMATION LONDON 20, PARIS 18, TRIPOLI 255

TRIPOLI ALSO PASS 7272 ABW

PARIS FOR FINN

Re Embassy Telegram 214, repeated information Tripoli 239, London 19, Paris 17

At Belgian reception November 15, Minister of State Wahbn El-Buri made special point of speaking to me of his deep concern over present phase Libyan-American negotiations base agreement. He recalled his visit to US 1958 when still Foreign Minister and revealed Prime Minister had charged him at that time raise with Department renegotiations financial aspects base agreement, which Buri did (Department telegram 144, August 29, 1958. He believes that he received some encouragement in Washington that Libyan views would be given sympathetic consideration. He went on to say that Libyan Government was now committed publicly to renegotiations and that US Governmen's responses indicated complete lack of comprehension. Latest proposal, of which he was aware in principal detail, was not at all responsive to Liby request for additional payments for Wheelus Field. In fact, he said $4 million was regular payment for air base. $6 million for Development Council was "usual amount" which we had made available annually to cover differences in reduction British subsidy. He asked whether this was all, or whether continuing aid programs would be in addition. I reassured him on this latter point. Also pointed out that Libyan Government had received $32.5 millions worth of various types of aid

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of aid from US Government FY 1959 funds exlcusive of TC funds. Buri acknowledged this but argued US objectives much achieved if we gave $20 million of this large amounts in various types economic aid and "$4 or 5 million" of our total outpay each year in cash for air base. I explained difficulty of changing our universal policy of assistance for economic development and making exception of Libya, but Buri replied that legal basis for such exception already existed in provision for special fund payments in 1954 agreement. He then urged that the $1 million annual payment to begin 1961 should be increased to "$4 or 5 million" for duration of agreement in specific recognition of our base rights. I expressed gratification at discreet nature Prime Minister reply to press question regarding present status Libyan-American negotiations (Embassy telegram 223). Added hope Libyan Governments reply to our latest proposal would be forthcoming promptly as promised by Prime Minister two weeks ago. Buri replied later presenting Libyan position Council of Ministers November 18. Said he would do his best, as one Minister, to maintain calm, objective discussion and dispassionate response.

I reiterated hope I be given Libyan response, whatever it might be, as soon as possible after MTG Council Ministers, and that I be given opportunity submit it to Washington for consideration before Libyan Government made public disposition either in press or radio or other public utterances.

Buri is personally friendly to US and our position here. I believe his exposition above represents most favorable of GOL currents in our present dispute. I intend see Prime Minister Jed to register my concern we be given opportunity receive aids Libya pksation* in response our latest proposal without handicap of publicity here.

JONES

ME:DJC/9

* As received. Will service upon request.

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